

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 PARIS 07190 01 OF 02 222139Z

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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R 221838Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7749

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 PARIS 7190

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EGEN, ENRG, RF, EC

SUBJECT: VIEWS OF FRENCH OFFICIAL ON U.S./EC RELATIONS

SUMMARY: SOUVIRON, DEPUTY CHIEF OF CABINET TO FOREIGN MINISTER JOBERT, WHILE APPARENTLY PLEASED ABOUT DECISION TO GIVE HLG PART OF ENERGY ACTION PROGRAM, BELIEVED ENERGY QUESTION HAD BEEN OVERSHADOWED BY LARGER QUESTION OF OVERALL U.S./EC RELATIONS. WHILE WELCOMING MODERATE TONE OF PRESIDENT'S HOUSTON REMARKS, HE BELIEVED THAT U.S. POSITION ON FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES HAD NOT CHANGED. HE SAID THERE WAS WIDE GULF BETWEEN U.S. AND FRENCH POSITIONS ON CHARACTER OF U.S./EC RELATIONSHIP. HE CONSIDERS THAT, SO FAR AS FURTHER ACTION ON U.S./EC AND NATO DECLARATIONS IS CONCERNED, BALL IS IN U.S. COURT. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING A CONVERSATION WITH ECON/COM MIN, SOUVIRON EXPRESSED CURRENT FOREIGN OFFICE THINKING ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF U.S./EC RELATIONS IN A NOTABLY CANDID MANNER.

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PAGE 02 PARIS 07190 01 OF 02 222139Z

(SOUVIRON, WHO HAS GENERAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR EC AFFAIRS

ON JOBERT'S STAFF, HAS EMERGED AS PROBABLY ONE OF HIS MOST INFLUENTIAL AND UNCOMPROMISING ADVISORS.)

2. SOUVIRON WAS QUITE RELAXED ABOUT ENERGY COOPERATION. HE SEEMED PLEASED ABOUT THE DECISION TO GIVE THE HLG RESPONSIBILITY FOR CERTAIN PARTS OF THE ENERGY ACTION PROGRAM AND ABOUT FRANCE'S ASSOCIATION WITH THIS PHASE OF THE WORK. "AFTER ALL," HE NOTED, "WE HAVE ALWAYS FAVORED DEALING WITH THE ENERGY PROBLEM IN OECD," THUS IMPLYING THAT ASSOCIATION WITH THE WORK OF THE HLG WAS PERFECTLY CONSISTENT WITH FRENCH PRINCIPLES.

3. IN ANY CASE, SOUVIRON SAID, THE ENERGY QUESTION HAS BEEN OVERSHADOWED BY THE LARGER QUESTION OF OVERALL U.S./EC RELATIONS. HE SAID HE WAS PLEASED WITH THE MODERATE TONE PRESIDENT NIXON HAD TAKEN IN HIS REMARKS AT HOUSTON BUT DID NOT INTERPRET THESE AS INDICATING ANY CHANGE IN THE U.S. POSITION ON THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS AT ISSUE. ECON/COM MIN REPLIED THAT THIS WAS INDEED A CORRECT INTERPRETATION. SOUVIRON SAID FRENCH WERE PUZZLED AT THE VIOLENCE OF OUR REACTION TO THE EC'S MARCH 4 AGREEMENT ON RELATIONS WITH THE ARABS. THE AGREEMENT SEEMED INNOCUOUS ENOUGH. WHY HAD IT UPSET US SO MUCH?

4. ECON/COM MIN REPLIED THAT HE THOUGHT THE REASONS WERE PRETTY OBVIOUS. FIRST, EVEN THOUGH THE SECRETARY HAD BEEN INFORMED OF THE EC INITIATIVE BY SCHEEL SHORTLY BEFORE IT HAPPENED, THIS COULD HARDLY BE CONSIDERED CONSULTATION. WE HAD NO OPPORTUNITY TO ENSURE THAT OUR VIEWS WERE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT BY THE NINE BEFORE THEY MADE THEIR DECISION. SECOND, THE U.S. FEARED THAT, COMING AT THIS PARTICULAR JUNCTURE, THE EC INITIATIVE COULD PREJUDICE THE DELICATE NEGOTIATIONS WE WERE CONDUCTING IN AN ATTEMPT TO BRING PEACE TO THE MIDDLE EAST. THIRD, A PREMATURE APPROACH TO THE ARABS COULD COMPLICATE AND POSSIBLY NEGATE THE EFFORT TO FORMULATE A COORDINATED APPROACH OF THE OIL-CONSUMING COUNTRIES IN PREPARATION FOR THE DIALOGUE WITH THE PRODUCERS. FOURTH, THIS EPISODE RAISED THE MUCH BROADER QUESTION OF WHAT KIND OF
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 PARIS 07190 01 OF 02 222139Z

RELATIONSHIP THERE WAS GOING TO BE BETWEEN THE EC AND THE U.S. IT LOOKED INCREASINGLY TO US AS THOUGH THE EC BELIEVED THAT ITS IDENTITY COULD BE ESTABLISHED ONLY BY REFERENCE TO, IF NOT OUTRIGHT OPPOSITION TO, THE U.S.

5. SOUVIRON REPLIED THAT, IF THE NINE WERE EVER TO CREATE A EUROPEAN IDENTITY, IT WOULD HAVE TO BE IN RELATION TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD, BE IT THE COMMUNIST

COUNTRIES, THE MIDDLE EAST, OR WHAT NOT. NO PARTICULAR
BIAS AGAINST U.S. WAS INTENDED. ECON/COM MIN REPLIED
THAT PLACING THE U.S. IN THE SAME CATEGORY AS THESE

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PAGE 01 PARIS 07190 02 OF 02 222139Z

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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R 221838Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7750

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 PARIS 7190

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OTHER GROUPS WAS SIMPLY NOT CONSISTENT WITH THE SPECIAL
TIES OF HISTORY, CULTURE, MUTUAL SECURITY, AND THE LIKE,
WHICH EXISTED BETWEEN THE U.S. AND EUROPE. THIS WAS
PRECISELY THE PROBLEM THAT THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY
KISSINGER WERE SO CONCERNED ABOUT.

6. SOUVIRON REPLIED MERELY THAT IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT THE
GULF BETWEEN FRENCH AND U.S. THINKING WAS WIDE. IN ANY
CASE, HE HOPED THAT THE DISCUSSION OF OUR DIFFERENCES
COULD BE PURSUED QUIETLY THROUGH NORMAL DIPLOMATIC
CHANNELS RATHER THAN IN THE HEADLINES OF THE WORLD
PRESS. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE WONDERED WHAT OUR THINKING
WAS ON THE NATO AND U.S./EC DECLARATIONS. ECON/COM
MIN STATED THAT WE WOULD BE GUIDED BY VIEWS OF EUROPEANS
ON WHAT THE NEXT STEPS WOULD BE. SOUVIRON REPLIED THAT TH
FRENCH DID NOT CONSIDER THAT THE BALL WAS IN THE EUROPEAN

COURT. EUROPE HAD NOT BEEN THE DEMANDEUR IN THIS ENTERPRISE,
AND SO FAR AS HE COULD SEE, THE NEXT MOVE WAS UP TO US.
ECON/COM MIN REPLIED THAT THIS WAS NOT OUR VIEW AND SAID HE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 PARIS 07190 02 OF 02 222139Z

ASSUMED THAT IN DUE COURSE ONE OR MORE OF THE EUROPEANS
WOULD FIND IT DESIRABLE TO PUT THE BALL BACK INTO PLAY.
ON THIS INCONCLUSIVE NOTE, THE CONVERSATION ENDED.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS), FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, DECLARATIONS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL CO OPERATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 MAR 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974PARIS07190
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P740141-1655, D740062-0376
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740322/aaaaausa.tel
Line Count: 182
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 APR 2002 by collinp0>; APPROVED <05 JUN 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VIEWS OF FRENCH OFFICIAL ON U.S./EC RELATIONS
TAGS: EGEN, ENRG, FR, US, XG, EEC, NATO, HLG, (NIXON, RICHARD M), (SOUVIRON), (JOBERT)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005